

described me as a matchstick, skinny and red at the top, but I've gotten older and a little...put on about five pounds and it is starting to show. Let me, let me add a few things. The amendment I think is a good faith attempt to try and strike some compromise, and I would only add that perhaps we might want to add the State Office Building in this. The problem is the point of trying to get that air circulation in a separate room, and I think if we have that, then I think probably we can, in fact, move forward. Not having that, though, I know in the State Office Building down in the basement cafeteria, they do allow for smoking down there. And if you are ever down there, the whole basement reeks of the smell of smoke, and a lot of complaints have been forthcoming. So I think the key point here is the air exchange and trying to move forward on that. So I think there is a common ground on this particular item that we might have some agreement that we can reach. I did want to point out to you, though, that I've got a handout from Martha Carter, who I want to thank, and the Research Division, who I want to thank, on estimated smoke related health care costs. If you get a chance to look at it, there's a lot of interesting information, but the bottom line is, on the different studies, each pack of cigarettes is estimated to cost, from one study, \$2.06 per pack; another study I think the figure is \$2.59 a pack; and then the final study is \$2.91 a pack of cigarettes. So somewhere between, basically, two and three dollars a pack of cigarettes is what the health care or direct or indirect related costs are for each pack of cigarettes that we smoke. And the total cost that we are talking about is \$50 billion nationally upwards to \$68 billion. So we are talking about something that has a very great impact on the health of Americans and the health of Nebraskans. This is not taking into account the indirect, people that breathe in this smoke. This is just from the smokers themselves, and the question is still out as to how much impact there is on those that breathe smoke in the air. But, clearly, I think the concern about the health of people that smoke, the health of those that are around people that smoke is something worth taking an interest in. There is a cost impact because of the health impact of smoking. So, in my view, I think that moving forward and trying to provide for a smoke-free environment for our state employees and for those who utilize our state offices and state agencies, it is probably a thing we ought to do. I do think the idea of allowing for some flexibility is probably not an unreasonable thing, and so Senator Schimek's amendment in my view...it doesn't I guess take effect now because we don't have such a room in the State